

Careless Whisper by xanaphorax

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Summary: After a minor altercation with Billy Hargrove at a party, Lucy asks her ex-boyfriend Steve to drive her home, unaware of the chain of events that she just put into place. (Post Stranger Things 2)
Steve x OC

1. Holiday Cheer

(Chapter 1) Holiday Cheer

Author's Note: *Welcome! I've recently branched into Stranger Things fics and realized there's an abundance of Steve and Dustin's sister fics or post-Nancy girlfriends, but I thought this might be an interesting idea. In some ways, I consider this chapter a Beta test of the two characters and their history. In the grander scale, I'm thinking of incorporating her into part of Season 2 and then what happens after things go to normal. I would love love love feedback about what you think of their story and the characters just from this small chapter.*

If her friends ever got her to go to another party, it would be a miracle.

After a week—a *week*—of being pestered and begged and berated and all around harassed, they had *finally* convinced her to come to Chris Winters' holiday party.

"It will be fun," they said.

"Chris' parties always have the best drinks," they said.

"We can all dance away this college bullshit," they said.

"You'll be so glad you didn't miss it."

All of it was lies. Except for maybe the part about Chris having the best drinks. If there was one thing this party had going for it—besides the music—it was the "Holiday Cheer" concoction that was being served up on the counter. There was a *shitload* of Peppermint Schnapps in it, and it was absolutely delicious.

But her friends. They were dead to her.

Becky had decided to take three shots within the first half hour and proceeded to get completely wasted from there. Darlene had gone full mom and made herself Becky's official babysitter to prevent Becky from killing herself. Tiffany had stuck by Lucy for a while until she

noticed that Jeff was at the party. It had only been a matter of time for *that* to happen, so when Tiffany ditched Lucy for Jeff, it was hardly surprising.

Lucy had *known* this was going to happen, and yet she still managed to feel disappointed.

At least she had her cup of "Holiday Cheer" to somewhat lift her spirits.

She wandered through the crowd, attempting to find *any* of the people she had come with, pushing her way past couples tangled together and large groups of friends who were dancing like maniacs and seemingly enjoying themselves. She stopped, standing up on her tiptoes to try to scan over the crowd.

"Hey," a low voice greeted her from behind, and she turned quickly to face whoever it could be, slightly sloshing her drink in her haste.

Billy Hargrove. Great.

It wasn't that she had anything personal against Billy Hargrove, it was more the fact that he was the newly anointed "King of Hawkins High". Lucy hated, truly detested, the office of the "King." Because in order to be king, you had to be part asshole and part womanizer complete with heartbreaking looks and an aggressive streak. And while, Billy was definitely heartbreak material, he was also more openly aggressive on all fronts than any of the previous kings of Hawkins. And to be honest, Lucy just didn't have the time to deal with that. She had college applications due.

Billy smiled, licking his lips. "Looking for someone?" he raised an eyebrow. Despite herself, Lucy's eyes wandered down to his bare chest. The boy had unbuttoned his dark red shirt almost halfway in *December*.

Bold move, Hargrove, she acknowledged silently before returning her eyes to his face.

She didn't want to ask him for anything. He didn't seem the type to offer up information for free, but there was hardly a choice if she

wanted to get out of here. "Have you seen Tiffany?"

Billy's eyes glanced to his left as he pointed towards the doorway a couple of yards away. A couple leaned against the doorway, and Lucy recognized Tiffany's tight, bright green sweater and flurry of her dark, curly hair. Two hands were firmly holding onto Tiffany's ass as another face attacked hers. If Lucy kept looking, she was going to throw up.

"Great," Lucy commented, flatly.

"Must have found some mistletoe." Billy took a step closer to her, smirking even as Lucy stood her ground. She wasn't the type to let herself be intimidated by a boy making some moves. "Maybe we should find our own," he suggested, reaching up and tucking a strand of hair behind her ear, letting his hand rest against her neck.

"I'm good," Lucy shrugged away from his touch, turning to continue making her way through the crowd. Maybe Darlene would be tired of taking care of Becky and—

Arms snaked around her waist, pulling her back. Her stomach dropped. This party was really starting to suck.

"You sure?" Billy's voice rumbled from behind her. "I can show you a *real good time*."

"Hands off, Billy," Lucy groaned, attempting to push his hands off her waist, but unwilling to lose her drink in the process. Priorities, you know?

"Come on," Billy pushed, pulling her closer into him so her back was flush against his front. He leaned over her shoulder, whispering in her ear, "Where's your giving spirit, *Loosey*?"

She froze. There it was. It was in the way he said her name that she knew *exactly* what he meant. It was *that* nickname. The reason she had stopped going to parties. The reason she stopped going by Louise. She had tried to take her name back, but it didn't matter. Loosey Mitchell still followed her.

"Fuck you," she spat, pulling away angrily, and starting off towards

the crowd. Billy's hand wrapped around her forearm, tugging her back once more and sending her drink flying out of her grasp and across the floor.

"Don't play games," he warned. His smile was more menacing than charming now. "I don't do well with competition."

Lucy stepped forward, teeth gritted. "Get your *fucking* hands off of me," she ground out.

Billy leaned forward, and fearing that his face was too close, Lucy brought up her knee, connecting it with his groin. He jerked away, allowing her to rip her arm out of his grip. Her heart pounded against her chest as she took off into the crowd, searching for the front door. She was done trying to find her dumb friends and making the best out of this dumb party. She was leaving.

"Hey!" Lucy felt another hand grab at her, and learning from her mistakes, she whirled on the person with her fist raised, landing a good punch on her ex-boyfriend's face.

"What the *fuck*?" Steve Harrington swore, lifting a hand to his cheekbone.

"Shit, I'm sorry," Lucy sputtered. "I thought you were—" She stopped, noticing the crowd parting over his shoulder. She could only guess who was working his way in her direction. "Sorry, gotta bounce." She turned again, pushing people out of her way. A wake of cursing and one fingered salutes followed her, but she didn't care. Just another dumb boy trying to get into her pants because of the *stupidest* rumors.

Lucy reached the front door, deciding to figure out her way home once she was outside and could think straight. Maybe somebody would be leaving at the same time and she could hitch a ride or at least get dropped off in the general vicinity of her house. She pulled open the door and ran out, stopping dead in her tracks at the disappointing scene in front of her.

Nobody was outside.

The cars parked along the street were all dark and still, and snow was

lightly coming down from the sky. She could feel her chest growing tight as the panic truly began to set in.

She could walk. No, she couldn't walk. Her house was at least forty-five minutes away by foot, and her coat was in Tiffany's car. She'd freeze to death before she even got to her neighborhood.

She could go back inside to the party and try to steal the keys from Tiffany under the guise of getting her coat. Then she could swing back by every hour or so to see if her friends were finally ready to leave.

Deciding it was worth potentially running into Billy again if only to get the hell out of there, Lucy turned around and ran straight into someone. Both stumbled back a bit, and Steve reached out, steadying her.

"Steve!" she exclaimed, a new and desperate thought racing through her. "Did you drive here?"

He nodded, looking both confused and concerned at the same time. He opened his mouth to speak, but she cut him off.

"Take me home."

"Why? What's wrong?" Steve asked.

"Take. Me. Home," Lucy repeated, firmly. Steve nodded again, taking off across the yard to his car. They had almost reached it when a voice rang out.

"*Harrington!*"

"Let's go," Lucy whispered, already reaching for the car door's handle. "Ignore him. Let's go."

"Back for sloppy seconds?" Billy shouted out with a short laugh.

Lucy tensed, and Steve went rigid, his hand curling into a fist. He shook his head and started to turn. Lucy lunged at him, grabbing his arm, her fingernails digging into his skin.

"If we don't leave right fucking now, I will *put you in the ground!*" she hissed.

Steve looked down at his ex-girlfriend's face as she released him, his eyes glancing back to Billy Hargrove who was making his way down to them. *Fast.*

"Ok," he nodded, and the two climbed into the car.

Neither was buckled when Steve whipped out of there. Lucy was thrown against the door, hitting it hard.

"Sorry," Steve quickly apologized, making several turns around the neighborhood as if attempting to lose a tail. She waved him off, reaching up and buckling. It wasn't until they were out of Chris' development that Steve's driving slowed.

"So, uh, you want to talk about it?" Steve asked, finally remembering to turn on his headlights.

"No," Lucy slumped against the door, looking out the window. The adrenaline had seemingly drained from her, leaving her exhausted and wanting to make this car ride with her ex as quick and painless as possible.

"Ok," Steve nodded and looked back at the road. The two listened to the sounds of the wheels against the pavement, winter winds rustling around the car. She shivered slightly, wishing for her coat.

"Are you sure?" Steve asked.

Lucy side-eyed him before reaching over and turning on his radio, "Careless Whisper" playing out over the radio. While she was at it, she turned on the heat.

Lucy didn't hate Steve. She wouldn't have pressured him into driving her home if she had. She had made her peace with him a year and a half ago and had finally decided that she was open to being friends after he'd had his ass kicked by Jonathan Byers. After seeing him drop Tommy H. and Carol as friends, she'd even decided she'd make the first move and had started sitting next to him in their math class. She still sat next to him in math class. They even hung out

sometimes. They were friendly enough that this car ride really should have been no big deal.

But Billy's words echoed in her head. "*Where's your giving spirit, Loosey?*"

She couldn't stop repeating it to herself, and she couldn't stop thinking about how that nickname had been thrust upon her in the worst moment of her life.

And it was all Steve's fault.

They reached the chorus of George Michael's song before Steve spoke again.

"So, who did you think I was?"

"Oh my g—can you just drive?" Lucy snapped, gesturing the road, frustrated.

"I just want to know why I got punched in the face," Steve sounded equally frustrated, and he even broke his concentration from the road to briefly look at her. "And you know, maybe why I'm giving you a ride home?"

Lucy shook her head to herself, looking up at the car's roof. "You know, sometimes I forget that even though you have a head, there's *nothing* inside it," she bit.

Steve went quiet. Out of the corner of her eye, she could see him staring down the road, his hands tightly gripping the steering wheel. She had gone back to staring out the window, slumped against the car door, when he finally connected the dots. "What did Billy do?"

"Nothing. I left," Lucy rolled her eyes.

He didn't respond. Instead, they sat through "Maneater," "Tainted Love," and "Working for the Weekend." Apparently Steve had found the one radio station not playing Christmas carols. It wasn't until "Dancing in the Dark" that Steve spoke up again.

"The things he said outside—"

"I don't want to talk about it, Steve," Lucy cut him off.

"He didn't try to—"

"I don't want to talk about it, Steve," Lucy repeated, harshly.

"Fine."

"Good," she sighed, biting the inside of her lip as she watched house after house of Christmas lights pass by.

Her mind drifted back to when she and Steve were sixteen, in the early days of their relationship when they had only been together for a few weeks. Steve had wanted to go around Hawkins to look at the different Christmas lights with her, and feeling as if it were the most romantic date in the world, she had agreed. Of course, when she had agreed, it had been under the presumption that they would be driving around in the warmth of the new car he got for his birthday and listening to Christmas songs. Instead, he had *insisted* that they both bundle up and actually walk around the town, taking their time to see the lights.

"Steve, it's so cold!" she whined, leaning into him as the pair walked down Dearborn. They had only been outside for half an hour, but she was already freezing and ready to give in. Her mother had offered to make the two of them hot chocolate when Steve brought her back home.

"It's not that bad," Steve shook his head, laughing at her even as he squeezed her hand reassuringly.

"Yes, it is. I can't feel my face it's so cold," she protested, only exaggerating a tiny bit.

"Well, that's fixable," Steve remarked, stopping short and turning towards her. Her heart sped up, almost beating out of her chest as she realized he was leaning down, and this was really happening, and what was she supposed to do, and his lips were on hers.

Whether she was frozen because of the cold or the shock of her first kiss, it took a moment before her eyes closed, and she kissed him back, reveling in the warmth of being wrapped in Steve's arms.

"He didn't *do* anything," she admitted, quietly. "He just...called me Loosey."

Steve's brow furrowed in confusion.

"And he asked where my *giving spirit* was," she continued. She could tell he understood because his grip on the steering wheel tightened until his knuckles were white.

"God, I mean, when will people let that go," she sank back against the window, leaning her head against it and closing her eyes to block out the Christmas lights. She could feel her throat tightening and her chest constricting. She was *not* going to cry. Not in front of Steve. She had already done that once in her life, and that was enough.

"Lou," he started, and she just shook her head.

He drove the rest of the way in silence.

Steve pulled up next to the curb by her house, and Lucy flung the door open, getting out before the car was even parked. "Thanks for the ride," she threw over her shoulder.

"Wait, hey! " The car door closed, cutting him off.

She hurried around the back of her house, on her way to the tree that led to her bedroom window. A tree she remembered Steve learning how to scale with ease. She bit her lip again, willing the tears to just *go away*.

This was why she didn't want to tell him. Because now it'd bring everything back up. Everything she'd pushed down when he started dating all of those other girls. Everything she'd covered up by taking the nickname Lucy as if it didn't matter where it originally came from. She could hear Steve's thundering footsteps behind her. "Lucy, look--"

"Can you just leave me alone, and let me get into my house?" Lucy whirled on him. "If I had known you'd be on my shit, I wouldn't have asked you to drive me."

"What? Somehow giving a shit makes *me* the bad guy?" Steve

snapped.

"No, you're the bad guy because you're the reason any of this happened tonight," Lucy shot back. She didn't care if it was slightly unfair. She wanted him to go. Back to the party. Back to his home. She didn't care where as long he was not here. She never should have asked him for a ride after what happened with Billy. *Fuck*, she was so *stupid*. "And it's sure as hell convenient that you give a shit now, and not back then when it would have mattered. You know? When *you* were the reason I was running out of a party."

"I was sixteen!" Steve argued.

"So was I. *And* I was the one who was groped by some drunk senior because my *boyfriend* was telling everybody about how good I was in bed."

"I was drunk."

"So that's why you told *everyone* that if they ever wanted to have a little fun, I was the person to come to because, let me see if I remember it right: 'All you have to do is ask, and she practically gives it away,'" Lucy snapped, tears stinging her eyes. She had held onto those words for a while. "You practically announced to everyone that I was a huge slut and then laughed about it with everyone else when Carol started calling me Loosey."

And shit, she was crying.

"Lou," Steve sounded so broken.

"And I still don't know why you did it, Steve. I don't get why you couldn't have just told me you didn't love me anymore like a normal person." He flinched.

"I wasn't trying to break up with you," Steve mumbled quietly.

"What, were you *bragging* about how your girlfriend was a slut?" Her voice cracked on the word.

"I don't know. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I was an idiot. I *am* an idiot."

"It's because of *you* that people like Billy feel like they have the right to put their hands all over me," and she was no longer just crying, but almost choking on sobs. She was going to wake up her parents. But she didn't care. She had held onto this for too long. She had pushed it down and down and apparently one stupid car ride home was all it took for everything that was left unresolved to come back up. "I loved you," she heaved. "And I didn't expect us to last forever, but I thought that at least you wouldn't treat me like trash. Like I didn't have feelings."

Steve's face was tight with pain, and selfishly she hoped he understood. She hoped that whatever that shit was that had gone down with Nancy had taught him exactly what he did to her. He looked away from her, down at the ground.

"You deserved better than me," he spoke.

She sniffled and then looked at him with shining eyes, tear tracks streaking her face.

"Yeah," she whispered. "I did."

And then she turned away, to go back to her tree.

And like an asshole, he let her go.

She hated parties.

2. Window Pains

(Chapter 2) Window Pains

Author's Note:: *Wow! Can I just say I was blown away by the reviews I received on this. Thank you so much to those who took the time to write out your thoughts. I appreciate it, and it took me a while to get this out because I changed some things with my future plans based on the feedback I got. So, thanks again! Sorry it's so short, but the next one will be super long. And, dude, I'm excited for the next chapter. There's going to be sass. And fighting. And the Party may or may not make an entrance. But, as always, let me know what you think! It means the world to me.*

Lucy didn't come out of her room for two days. And it definitely wasn't because of the Christmas party. After crying herself to sleep that night, she'd woken up feeling a little silly, even if she was still sort of angry. But Steve Harrington was the least of her worries this Christmas break—mostly because she didn't have to even think about dealing with him until January 2nd.

The more pressing concern was her mother.

Her mother who was currently banging on her door to remind her that the family was expected for dinner at her father's boss' house.

Lucy cracked her door open, peering out at her mother who was already dressed, red turtleneck tucked into her high-waisted navy skirt, her hair and makeup done. "I don't feel well," Lucy moaned, trying to make her voice as low and scratchy as possible. "I don't think I should go."

"Absolutely not," her mother cut across her sharply. "You're going."

"I'm serious," Lucy whined. "My stomach hurts, and I feel all hot."

Her mother set her jaw, glaring at her. "You're. Going."

"Why? They're *your* friends," Lucy dropped the act.

"Louise Ann," her mother snapped, pointing a finger at her. "I don't

know what's gotten into you, and I don't care. Drop the attitude, and get ready. We're leaving in ten minutes."

Lucy rolled her eyes and shut the door. Her mother never cared.

Something between a frustrated sigh and a growl rolled up through her body as her hands clenched into fists and suddenly—but not entirely unexpectedly—a scream exploded out of her. She heard her mother's rushed footsteps, presumably to the stairs to yell at her, and then her father's voice.

"If she doesn't want to go, she doesn't have to go."

"She's going, Harold."

"Why? So she can sulk at the dinner table? If she wants to stay locked up in her room, let her."

"She's going because they invited our *family*. And whether we like it or not, we're all in this family so we're all going."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

Lucy rolled her eyes as the argument continued and flung the door to her closet open, grabbing a random dress and throwing it on. After a quick look in the mirror and running a brush through her hair, she stalked out of her room and down the stairs, interrupting her parents mid-shouting much.

"I'll be in the car," she glowered before walking out of the house and slipping into the back seat of her station wagon.

Lucy stormed into her room, throwing the door open only to immediately slam it shut behind her.

This was some *bullshit*.

Her parents had argued the entire car ride there, only stopping to plaster on smiles when Mrs. Boss-Man opened up the door and greeted them all into her *Good Housekeeping* home. Not only had Lucy been forced to sit silently through an entire dinner of her dad talking

shop with his boss and her mom trading cooking tips with his wife—her go-to move when she had *nothing* in common with a fellow woman—but when her presence finally was acknowledged, it was only so the adults could grill her about college. As if she didn't have enough on her mind, they decided to heap on the anxiety of having absolutely no clue what she was doing with her life. And then, to top it all off, her parents had argued over nothing the entire way back. There was no Mrs. Boss-Man to stop them when they walked in their front door, either.

She needed air.

Lucy crossed the room to her window, pulling back the curtains before stopping, her eyes falling on a small piece of paper taped to the outside of her window. She squinted, taking in the familiar scrawling handwriting.

Lou – I'm sorry. Can we talk? – S

Her chest clenched, and she yanked open the window, pushing the note up and out of sight. She stuck her head out, gulping in as much cold air as she could possibly manage. She shut her eyes, letting the icy wind slap her face and tussle her hair. It felt good.

Why couldn't he have just waited until January 2nd?

It was so much harder to push down all of the feelings when he wouldn't just leave her alone.

Lucy withdrew her head, walking back to her bed and throwing herself onto it, staring face up at the ceiling. She had more things to worry about than Steve Harrington and her potentially unresolved feelings towards him. Like college. Or even her parents' shitty marriage.

But no, instead her memories were creeping back in and playing themselves before her eyes, as if the blank white ceiling was a projector screen for her to replay her past.

She walked into her room and dropped her backpack down at the foot of her bed as she beelined it to the window. Hadn't been in the house for two

minutes and her mother was already on her. She pushed the curtains to one side, finding a piece of paper taped to the window.

Lou –

Do you have a bandaid? I scraped my knee falling for you.

– S

She laughed, reaching out and taking it from the window. When she walked into school the next day, she headed straight to Steve's locker.

"Hey," he grinned at her, closing his locker door and turning towards her.

"Hey," she smiled. "I have something for you."

"Oh, yeah?" Steve raised an eyebrow, leaning his shoulder against the locker.

She nodded, digging into her pocket and pulling out a bandaid. Steve took it, his eyebrows knitted in confusion as he stared at it. "Uh, thanks, Lou," he said, looking back up at her.

If anything, her smile grew. "It's for your knee," she gestured. "Since you scraped it falling for me and everything."

Recognition dawned on Steve's face as a small smile tugged at the corner of his lips. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Hmm," she hummed. "Must have been a dream. If you don't want it, I can take it back." She offered her hand, palm up for him to place the bandaid back in.

"Nah, I'll keep it," Steve pushed himself up from the lockers, putting his hand on top of hers, and taking hold of it, bringing the joined hands down to their sides while lacing his fingers with hers. "Just in case." He started off down the hallway and, since they were holding hands, she followed.

That night, she'd found another note taped to her window with a bandaid.

Lou — I've been waiting for a girl like you. – S

And the next day.

Lou – Do you know karate? Because your body is really kickin'. – S

And the next day.

Lou — Pretty woman, give your smile to me – S

And then again.

Lou – If nothing lasts forever, will you be my nothing? – S

And again.

Lou — Your kiss is on my list. – S

And again.

Lou — Your legs must be tired because you've been running through my dreams all night. – S

Until it became a daily thing.

Lou – I'll stop the world and melt with you. – S

They appeared at different times of the day, sometimes after she'd been home for hours. Yet, somehow she'd never caught him. He was stealthy that way.

Lucy rolled off of the bed and back over to the window, reaching out and pulling the note off of the glass. And then her fingers seemed to have a mind of their own as they tore at the little piece of paper, diminishing it to nothing more than scraps as it fell down to the floor along with the tears that unbidden streamed through her face. Two fucking years and it still **hurt**. This was just more bullshit.

She bent over, picking up the remnants of the paper and piling them on the window sill before shutting the window and drawing the curtains. She returned to her bed and laid facedown into the pillow, letting it absorb her sobs.

Not that her parents could hear her over the sound of their own

shouts.